

News Release



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**Allied Maritime
Component Command
Headquarters Northwood**



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NATO WARSHIP HMS CHATHAM COMES TO THE RESCUE OF YEMENI FISHERMEN

Today Royal Navy warship HMS Chatham, who is part of NATO's counter piracy operation *OCEAN SHIELD* came to the rescue of Yemeni fishermen who were found adrift in the Gulf of Aden.

The Dhow, with 21 Yemeni fishermen on board was spotted drifting in the middle of the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) in the Gulf of Aden. HMS Chatham dispatched her Royal Marines Boarding Team to the Dhow to investigate further.

It quickly became clear that the dhow, which was full of fish and fishing equipment needed assistance. The distressed fishermen were in a vulnerable position in the middle of an extremely busy shipping lane and, to make matters worse, they were 81 miles from land with no fuel.

HMS Chatham was able to provide enough fuel to the Yemenis to enable them to return home safely.

Petty Officer Steve Perry who took charge of getting the fuel from HMS Chatham to the Dhow, said "The Master of the Dhow was happy to see us and very appreciative that a NATO ship were able to provide him with some fuel. I'm glad that we could help them go safely on their way."

HMS Chatham's Commanding Officer, Commander Simon Huntington, said "I am delighted that HMS Chatham was in the right place and able to help the Yemeni fishermen. The Royal Navy under NATO are here to deter the pirates and protect the interests of innocent seafarers and that is what we are achieving. These Yemeni fishermen live in fear of piracy themselves and on this occasion more than ever, they were safeguarded by the presence of NATO warships in the region."

HMS Chatham is in the Gulf of Aden contributing to Operation Ocean Shield, NATO's counter piracy mission off the Horn of Africa and in the Somali Basin. Along with other multinational Task Groups and warships in the area, HMS Chatham is protecting merchant ships, many of which are destined for the UK, as they transit these busy sea lanes which are a main artery of the global economy.

HMS Chatham, a Type 22 frigate was launched in 1988. Based in Plymouth, she is 150m long, has a crew of 250 and displaces 5,300 tonnes. Whilst officially designated a frigate, her comprehensive weapons fit gives her, in reality, the firepower of a cruiser. She is capable of engaging targets above, on or below the sea surface. The Ship carries anti-air and anti-missile SeaWolf missiles, anti-ship Harpoon missiles, anti-submarine Stingray torpedoes and a Lynx helicopter; she is also fitted with a variety of guns of up to 4½" (114mm) bore, advanced radars, sonars, computer systems and communications equipment to carry out her tasking. Powered by gas turbine engines, HMS Chatham can sprint at speeds of up to 30 knots. She is the seventh Royal Navy ship to bear the name; one of her predecessors had the honour of transporting the body of Admiral Lord Nelson from HMS Victory to Greenwich Hospital, where he lay in state until his funeral at St Pauls Cathedral.

Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1)

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. The four ships comprising SNMG1 are:

- HDMS Absalon (flagship, Danish Navy)
- HMCS Fredericton (Canadian Navy)
- USS Boone (USA Navy)
- HMS Chatham (UK Navy)

2. Permanently assigned to NATO, SNMG1 is a multi-national Naval Group that provides the NATO Alliance with the ability to quickly respond to crisis situations anywhere in the world. A capable, stand-alone task group, SNMG1 is one of four standing maritime elements that form a flexible core around which NATO can build a larger force to meet a wide range of missions that will include non-combatant evacuations, consequence management, counter terrorism, crisis response, embargo operations, etc.

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